

Project Management Planning

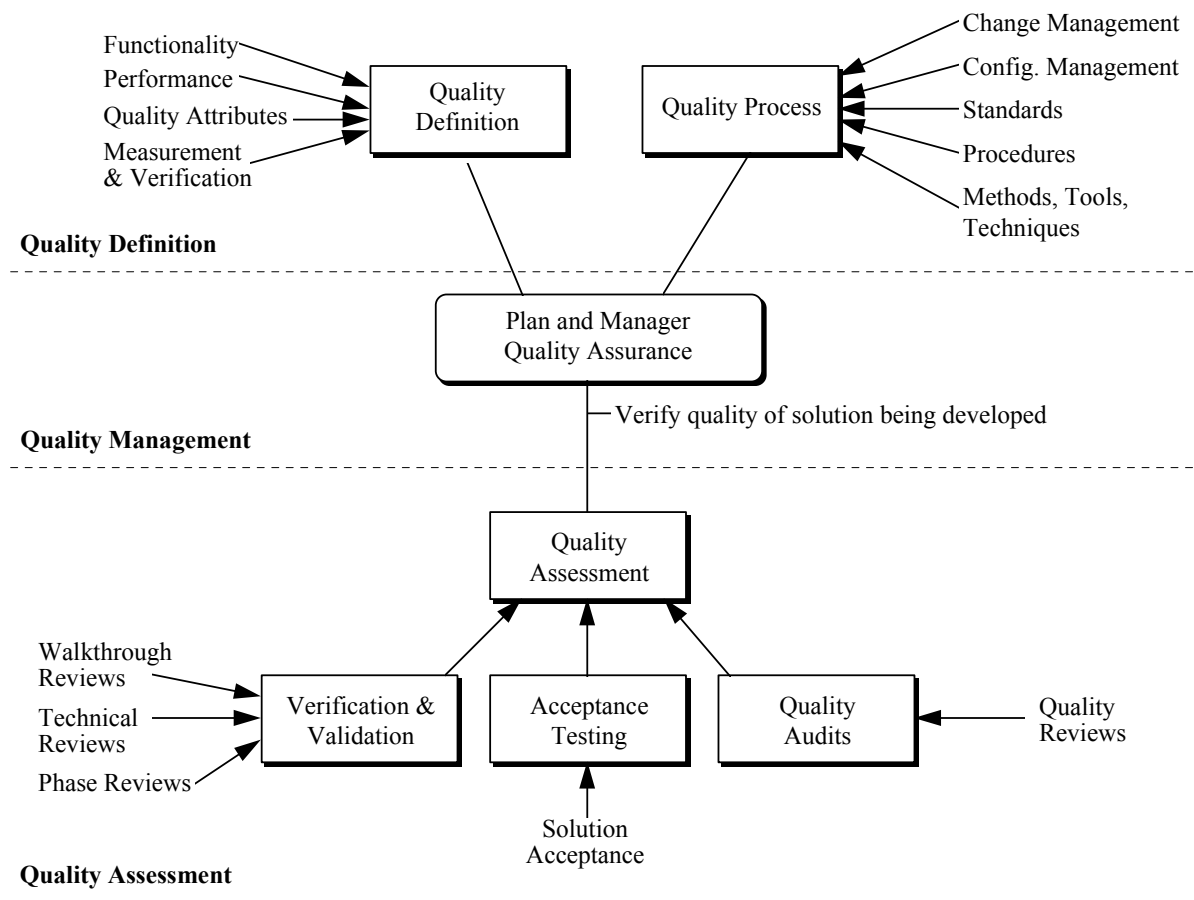
Quality Planning

Initial Release	1.0
Date:	January 1997

Quality Process

The quality plan identifies the procedures and activities that the project team defines, plans for, and executes for quality. A quality model should be maintained by each state organization, and this model should describe the detailed quality procedures that are used for IT projects. The following model defines a quality assurance process that is consistent with ISO (International Standards Organization) 9000 standards.

Quality Assurance Model



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Creating the Quality Plan

The state organization's quality model should be based on standards and procedures that enable the quality manager to ensure quality throughout the life of the project by:

- enforcing quality standards and procedures through formal reviews, walkthroughs, and inspections, and
- tracking and reviewing defects at each phase of the project.

Sometimes projects will not require a "unique" quality plan, but can be completed under the state organization's standard process. For large, lengthy or complex projects requiring a unique Quality Plan, it defines, tracks, and measures the project's quality goals. The Quality Plan describes how the project implements its quality process and defines the processes that will be taken to prevent and remove defects. It is important for management to consider the quality goals early in the project and ensure that quality activities are integrated into the overall project management plan. The quality plan is developed based upon the quality procedures developed by the state organization. These procedures address requirements that are specific to the state organization.

The quality plan identifies the person who is responsible for the quality assurance activities, identifies the scheduled quality activities, and identifies the resources required to conduct the activities. Quality activities are included in the project schedule as milestones and quality audits that require budgeting and staffing.

Successful quality processes always strive to see quality through the eyes of the customer. The customer is the ultimate judge of the quality of the product they receive. They will typically judge a project by whether or not their requirements are met. To ensure delivery of a quality product, each phase of the project should ensure that requirements are addressed.

It is important to include a process that validates that the currently defined requirements will be satisfactory to the customer. It is counterproductive to develop a system that meets a documented requirement if you and the user know that the requirement has changed. The change management process helps to control the number of such changes, but quality processes must be in place in order to make changes when they are necessary.

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Responsibility for Quality

Every project member needs to buy-in to the responsibility for producing a quality product. Through ownership of the state organization's quality policy, the individual team members become the most effective way to implement quality into products efficiently and completely. A quality policy cannot rely on "adding" quality at the end of a process; it must be built into the work of each individual on the team. It is far more cost effective to have team members add quality into their day-to-day jobs than to have a quality analyst find a problem after a process has been completed.

Independence of the Quality Assurance Team

While it is important that each team member be responsible for the quality execution of tasks, a quality team is typically included in the project team. The team assures that the quality plan is executed as planned. As an organization's quality processes mature, the need for the external quality unit decreases. This quality team reports functionally to the Project Manager, but must also have a reporting chain outside the project to facilitate problem escalation. Problem escalation is the process of moving a problem to a higher management level if sufficient attention is not given by the project manager. The independent reporting chain provides a check and balance on the project.

Checklist:

Quality checklists are often developed as part of the quality procedure definitions. The checklists and associated quality procedures are developed individually by each state organization.

References:

The quality plan overview for the project is included in the Project Management Plan template.